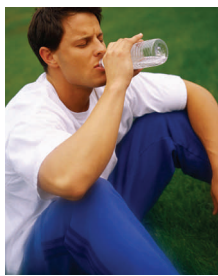


Stress and Eating

When stressed out or anxious, some people turn to food as a way to comfort themselves. However, what may be soothing at the time can make you feel worse – and weigh more - in the end. If you tend to turn to food as a way to cope with a stressful situation, consider the following nutritional tips:



- Don't drink caffeine or alcohol (and don't smoke) when stressed. These can heighten or prolong your anxiety and its side effects.
- Drink plenty of water - between six and eight glasses per day. This can help diminish the pangs of an empty stomach and promote a healthy digestive system.

- Keep your blood sugar levels stable by eating several small, nutritious meals rather than three large ones.
- Make sure your meals or snacks incorporate omega-3 fatty acids. Include walnuts, salmon and freshly ground flaxseeds into your diet.



- Incorporate foods rich in magnesium, which helps relax muscles, into your diet. Whole grains, legumes, vegetables, nuts and seeds are good sources.



Above all, be aware of your eating habits. If you find yourself eating to combat stress, limit yourself to small portions, enough so you can savor the taste or texture. Then go for a walk or practice meditating: both are healthier ways to reduce stress.